

PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD

MONDAY, October 21, 2002

3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:00 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with members Bloomfield, Borys, Clement, Kreider, Raser, Senhauser, Spraul-Schmidt, and Wallace present. Absent: Sullebarger

MINUTES

The minutes of the Monday, October 7, 2002 meeting were approved (motion by Clement, second by Borys).

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS AND ZONING VARIANCE 5½ BEECHCREST LANE, EAST WALNUT HILLS HISTORIC DISTRICT

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented the staff report on this request for a Certificate of Appropriateness and zoning variance for a two-story addition on the west elevation of the residence located at 5 ½ Beechcrest Lane. The building is a contributing resource within the East Walnut Hills Historic District.

Ms. Cowden stated that as proposed, the addition meets the East Walnut Hills Historic District Conservation Guidelines. The exterior finishes and materials will match that of the existing house and while the addition will change the building's overall massing, the design is compatible, reflecting the architectural detailing of the original home.

[Mr. Bloomfield joined the meeting.]

Ms. Cowden described the home as originally a carriage house associated with 5 Beechcrest Lane. As such, the house sits deep on the lot only, 9.7' from the rear property line; the attached rear deck is only 3' from the property line. The new addition and deck align with the existing, so require a variance for the 35' rear yard setback dictated by the zoning code.

Ms. Cowden confirmed for Mr. Bloomfield and Mr. Raser that staff contacted the neighboring property owners, as well as the East Walnut Hills Assembly by mail and had received no communication in response.

In answer to Ms. Borys, Ms. Cowden said the site drops off sharply from the street, so that the house was virtually invisible from Beechcrest Lane and elsewhere within the historic district. She also acknowledged that the fence shown in the site photographs was not indicated on the on the proposed plan, but would remain.

Architect Stewart S. Maxwell was present to respond to questions from the Board. He showed additional photographs of the fence that runs along the berm of the driveway and confirmed that the steep slope and heavy woods make it difficult to see the house from any vantage point on the property.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Bloomfield, second by Borys) to take the following actions:

1. Find that the addition meets the East Walnut Hills Historic District guidelines and approve a Certificate of Appropriateness with the condition that the final construction drawings be submitted to the Urban Conservator for approval prior to construction; and
2. Grant approval of a zoning variance to permit a 3'-0" rear yard setback in lieu of the required 35'-0" setback, finding that such relief:
 - a. Is necessary and appropriate in the interest of historic conservation so as not to adversely affect the historic, architectural or aesthetic integrity; and
 - c. Will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare or injurious to the property in the district or vicinity.

[Mr. Kreider joined the meeting.]

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS AND DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT
VARIANCE, 624 SYCAMORE STREET, KRIPPENDORF-DITTMAN BUILDING,
LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK**

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented the staff report for a Certificate of Appropriateness and Downtown Development (DD) variances to retain a street-level wall sign, which has been installed on the north elevation of the building located at 628 Sycamore Street, the Krippendorf-Dittman Building. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Samuel Hannaford Thematic nomination and is also an individually designated city landmark. The applicant applied for a permit, but installed the sign prior to receiving required approvals.

Ms. Cowden described the sign as being of individual metal letters mounted directly to the painted brick end wall facing Seventh Street. The sign is 177 square feet and reads "SYCAMORE PLACE / at St. Xavier Park / 634 Sycamore Street." Although broken, the total length of the Seventh Street wall is approximately 196'.

Ms. Cowden explained that the conservation guidelines are very general and do not specifically address signage. In the past, the Board has approved signs measuring one square foot per lineal foot as required of street signs in the Downtown Development District. Ms. Cowden said the sign is appropriately scaled for this substantial frontage.

Ms. Cowden stated that the sign is actually a building identification sign, but the Department of Buildings & Inspections determined that by size and placement, it better fits the definition of a street-level wall sign. DD Zoning limits the height of street-level wall signs to 3-½' and placement to the first story of a building. The applicant has requested a zoning variance for the height and placement of the sign.

Ms. Cowden pointed out that the building has been renamed and has been without a sign for some time. The sign is a crucial marketing tool for attracting tenants. Additionally, the sign will familiarize people with the new St. Xavier Park. The size location on the north elevation was chosen due to its visibility to pedestrians and drivers. Ms. Cowden stated that staff finds it meets the historic guidelines and recommended granting the necessary DD variances.

Ms. Borys commented that the high placement of the sign feels appropriate given the façade's set back from the street. Mr. Bloomfield remarked that it was unfortunate that the applicant had already installed the sign prior to obtaining the

required approvals and before the Board had an opportunity to comment on its size, lettering, placement, etc. He suggested that the Urban Conservator work with Buildings & Inspections in notifying applicants that they could be held liable if they do not obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness prior to completing work in an historic district.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted (motion by Spraul-Schmidt, second by Clement, with Kreider, Bloomfield and Senhauser abstaining) to take the following actions:

1. Find that the sign as currently installed meets the conservation guidelines for the Krippendorf-Dittman Building and approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the sign as installed; and
2. Grant approval of the necessary DD Variances to allow the sign to remain on the building as installed, finding that such relief:
 - a. Is necessary and appropriate in the interest of historic conservation so as not to adversely affect the historic, architectural or aesthetic integrity; and
 - c. Will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare or injurious to the property in the district or vicinity.

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS AND DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT VARIANCE, 19 EAST SEVENTH STREET, PROVIDENT BANK BUILDING, LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

Staff member Julia Carney presented the staff report for a Certificate of Appropriateness and Downtown Development variances for the installation of three awnings and a projecting sign on the Provident Bank Building, located at 19 East Seventh Street. The building is a locally designated landmark.

Ms. Carney described the proposed awnings as black with white lettering installed over two arched window openings and an arched doorway on the Seventh Street elevation. The "waterfall" awnings will be installed within the arches and will not cover any architectural details. She said the awnings conform to the guidelines for this building.

Ms. Carney stated that the proposed projecting sign is 15' high and would be mounted on a two-story granite pilaster, partially covering its capital. The sign would leave only a 9'-6" clearance above the sidewalk. As proposed, the sign does not meet the zoning requirements of the DD District. Signs are to be located below the second story of a building, are prohibited from concealing architectural elements, may be no larger than 3-½' in height, and have a minimum 10' clearance above the sidewalk. Staff recommended denial of a Certificate of Appropriateness and DD variances for the projecting sign as proposed, but suggested the Board consider Alternative A included with the staff report as a more appropriate design.

John Hollenbeck, from Lawrence Sign, St. Paul, MN, appeared before the Board to present a second alternative (Alternative B) developed subsequent to the staff report. Mr. Hollenbeck explained that his client's restaurant name, "Nick & Tony's", is copyrighted in a linear format, but the stacked letters shown in Alternative A are not so protected. Mr. Hollenbeck distributed a drawing of his Alternative B which was similar to the original proposal, but without the words "Bar and Grill" at the bottom.

The sign is a double-faced, illuminated projecting sign consisting of a black painted aluminum cabinet with a polished stainless border and polished stainless reverse channel letters backlit in white neon. Mr. Hollenbeck said the new design had been reduced to 8' in height, could be installed below the second floor without covering the pilaster capitol and would maintain a clearance of 10' above the sidewalk as required by zoning.

Mr. Hollenbeck confirmed for the Board that the proposed sign is 24" wide, including the letters, which are 5" deep. He indicated that the neon tubing will be behind the letter and would produce a dispersed glow against a flat black background. He explained that solid-state components might reduce the width of the cabinet but that cold temperatures cause the neon to dim and flicker. Mr. Hollenbeck said the sign would be made as thin as possible to house the required transformers, conduit, and wiring. The junction box will be mounted inside the building; conduit will be routed through one of the brackets.

The Board had particular concern that the installation not deface the stonework. Mr. Hollenbeck explained that the sign would be anchored with through bolts at four points with minimal impact. He added that his client's lease stipulates that should he vacate the building, the tenant is responsible for removing all signs and restoring the building to its original condition. Mr. Hollenbeck suggested that the sign be mounted approximately 8" from the building surface; he would submit a revised bracket design detailing the installation. The Board stipulated that the sign should be mounted no more than one foot from the surface of the pilaster.

Mr. Senhauser suggested the Board's approval of the zoning variance reflect the lease conditions and run with the tenant, not the building. This would afford the Board the opportunity to review signage at a later date, should the tenant change.

BOARD ACTION

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Bloomfield, second by Kreider) to take the following actions:

1. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of the awnings as shown on the revised plans dated October 9, 2002;
2. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the projecting sign, as submitted on October 21, 2002 as Alternative B, with the condition that the final bracket design be submitted to the Urban Conservator for approval; and
3. Grant approval of the necessary DD Variances, not to extend to a new owner or tenant, to allow the installation of a projecting sign as presented as Alternative B at the October 21, 2002 Board meeting, finding that such relief:
 - a. Is necessary and appropriate in the interest of historic conservation so as not to adversely affect the historic, architectural or aesthetic integrity; and
 - c. Will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare or injurious to the property in the district or vicinity.

OTHER BUSINESS

Urban Conservator Forwood presented the Board with a tentative schedule of 2003 Historic Conservation Board meeting dates. The Board accepted alternative dates for the fall and winter months.

ADJOURNMENT

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned.

William L. Forwood
Urban Conservator

John C. Senhauser
Chairman

Date